

REMARKS

Applicant has reviewed and considered the Office Action mailed on June 30, 2005, and the references cited therewith.

Claims 1, 6, 7, 11, 14, 15, 19, 20, 22, 23, and 28 are amended, claims 2-5, 12, 13, 16-18, 21, 24-27, and 29 are canceled, and claims 31-44 are added; as a result, claims 1, 6-11, 14, 15, 19, 20, 22, 23, 28, and 30-44 are now pending in this application.

§102 Rejection of the Claims

Claims 1, 2 and 8 were rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by Okada (U.S. Patent No. 6,275,917). Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 5, which was found to be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claim 2 has been canceled. Claim 8 depends on claim 1, which is believed to be in condition for allowance.

§103 Rejection of the Claims

Claims 3-4, 7, 11-14, 16, 19-22 and 25-27 were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okada (U.S. Patent No. 6,275,917) in view of James et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,026,472). Claims 3, 4, 12, 13, 16, 21, and 25-27 have been canceled, rendering this rejection moot with respect to those claims. Claim 7 has been amended to depend on claim 1, which is believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claim 11 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 18, which was found to be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claims 14 and 19 have been amended to depend directly on claim 11.

Claim 20 has been amended to include limitations of claim 24, which was found to be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, applicants respectfully believe claim 20 is in condition for allowance. Claim 22 depends on claim 20, and is believed to be in condition for allowance at least by virtue of dependency.

Claims 25-27 have been canceled. Applicants note that claims 25-27 have not been canceled for reasons related to patentability. Rather, claims 25-27 have been canceled to maintain a constant number of independent claims in order to avoid additional fees.

Claims 9 and 10 were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okada (U.S. Patent No. 6,275,917). Claims 9 and 10 depend on claim 1, which has been rewritten to include the limitations of claim 5. Accordingly, applicants believe claims 9 and 10 are in condition for allowance.

Claims 15, 17 and 23 were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okada (U.S. Patent No. 6,275,917) in view of James et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,026,472) and further in view of Gaither (U.S. Patent No. 6,223,256). Claim 17 has been canceled, rendering this rejection moot with respect to that claim. Claim 15 depends on claim 11, which has been rewritten to include the limitations of claim 18. Accordingly, applicants believe claim 15 is in condition for allowance. Claim 23 depends on claim 20, which is also believed to be in condition for allowance. Accordingly, applicants believe claim 23 is in condition for allowance.

Claims 28-30 were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Greene (U.S. Publication No. 2004/0139473) in view of Okada (U.S. Patent No. 6,275,917) and further in view of James et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,026,472). Claim 29 has been canceled, rendering this rejection moot with respect to that claim. Claim 28 has been amended to include limitations similar in scope to claim 18, which was found to be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, applicants respectfully believe claim 28 is in condition for allowance. Claim 30 depends on claim 28, and is believed to be in condition for allowance at least by virtue of dependency.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 5-6, 18 and 24 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 5 and any intervening claims, and claim 5 has been canceled. Claim 6 has been amended to be in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 11 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 18 and any intervening claims, and claim 18 has been canceled. Claim 20 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 24 and any intervening claims.

New Claims

Claims 31-44 have been added. Claim 31 depends on claim 1, which is believed to be in condition for allowance. Claims 32-36 depend on claim 6, which is believed to be in condition for allowance. Claims 37-38 depend on claim 11, which is believed to be in condition for allowance. Claims 39-41 depend on claim 20, which is believed to be in condition for allowance. Claims 42-44 depend on claim 28, which is believed to be in condition for allowance. Accordingly, applicants believe that all newly added claims are in condition for allowance at least by virtue of dependency. Further, each of the newly added claims recite limitations that further define over the references of record.

Conclusion

Applicants respectfully submit that the claims are in condition for allowance and notification to that effect is earnestly requested. The Examiner is invited to telephone Applicant's attorney (952-473-8800) to facilitate prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

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By their Representatives,

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Date 9-8-05

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CERTIFICATE UNDER 37 CFR 1.8: The undersigned hereby certifies that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail, in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner of Patents, P.O.Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on this 9 day of September, 2005.

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Signature